

Message Text

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: SPD'S LOWER SAXONY CHAIRMAN RESIGNS POST

SUMMARY: PETER VON OERTZEN, LONG A RESPECTED MEMBER OF
THE SPD'S LEFT WING BUT NEVER A SLAVISH FOLLOWER OF ITS
DOCTRINAL NONSENSE, HAS QUIETLY RESIGNED AS LOWER SAXONY
PARTY CHAIRMAN. KARL RAVENS WILL REPLACE HIM. END SUMMARY.

1. PETER VON OERTZEN, 53 (SPD), WAS, YEARS AGO, THE
DARLING OF THE LEFT IN LOWER SAXONY. BOTH AS POLITICIAN
(MINISTER OF CULTURE IN HANNOVER 1970-74) AND PROFESSOR
OF "THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS" AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HANNOVER
HE WAS AN ARTICULATE AND UNWAVERING SUPPORTER OF POLITICS
"LEFT OF THE MIDDLE." HE FIRST OPPOSED THE END OF IDEOLOGY
PRESCRIBED IN THE SPD'S GODESBERG PROGRAM OF 1959
AND THEN SOUGHT TO RESCUE THE BITS OF SOCIALISM IT
CONTAINS FROM THE RIGHT-WING PRAGMATISTS IN THE PARTY.

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2. EVEN DURING THOSE YEARS, HOWEVER, HE DID NOT LET
HIS POLITICAL PREDILICCTIONS BECOME BLINDERS. DESPITE
THE ANGER OF OTHER LEFTISTS HE SUPPORTED THE DECISION
TO EXCLUDE EXTREMISTS FROM GOVERNMENT AS "LEGITIMATE
SELF-PROTECTION FROM FORCES WHICH ARE NEITHER DEMOCRATIC
NOR SOCIAL" AND IN 1973 SAID QUITE PUBLICLY THAT,

"IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT IN ALL COMMUNIST SYSTEMS, OF WHATEVER VARIETY, DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS ARE PERSECUTED AND REPRESSED." AND MORE RECENTLY HE HAD CRITICISED THE SPD FOR ITS COMPARATIVE SILENCE ON THE PERSECUTION OF DISSIDENTS IN THE DDR, THOUGH HE HAS GENERALLY BEEN MORE RETIRING THAN HE USED TO BE.

3. VON OERTZEN HAS NOW DECIDED TO RELINQUISH THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE LOWER SAXONY SPD TO THE NEW LEADER OF THE SPD IN THE LOWER SAXONY PARLIAMENT, KARL RAVENS. VON OERTZEN HAS GIVEN NO EXPLANATION AND IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT. IT IS ASSUMED THAT HE WILL REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE LANDTAG BUT THE ASSUMPTION IS BASED ON NOTHING MORE THAN HIS SILENCE.

4. COMMENT: AS VON OERTZEN IS NOT ONLY A PAROCHIAL POLITICIAN BUT HAS A NATIONAL REPUTATION, HIS RETREAT FROM THE LIMELIGHT OF ACTIVE PARTY POLITICS MAY BRING A SIGH OF RELIEF FROM THE PARTY'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, BUT THERE IS ALSO A PRICE. THE SPD'S EXTREME LEFT, HOWEVER SMALL AND IN DISARRAY, WILL BE EVEN MORE DOMINATED BY THE BLOODY MINDED.

5. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THIS POST CHOSE VON OERTZEN AS A LEADER GRANTEE IN 1975. HE CAME BACK AN ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF THE UNITED STATES AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAID SO OPENLY AND FREQUENTLY. KISELYAK

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